

I support enactment of SB-522 to allow Bear Hunting in CT

First and foremost, this bill gives the experts in the State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection the discretion to manage the State's bear herd at sustainable numbers to prevent over-population, damage to private property, disease, damage to agricultural crops, damage to vehicles due to night time highway crossings, and above all, to maintain a balance in nature.

As a recreational beekeeper, one of my biggest fears is the expansion of the black bear range in CT and the damage bears do to bee hives. In the Fall, a hive being readied for harvest can be worth at least \$800 to \$1000 each. This includes the cost of the bees, equipment consisting of 2 brood boxes and as many as 4 honey supers, and the honey to be extracted. Bear-proofing a bee yard with construction of an electric fence has a minimum cost of \$500, with an actual cost of more than \$800. When bears are preparing for winter, they find bee hives and completely destroy the boxes and foundation in order to consume the honey. Bees in the hive die or leave the hive, looking for a place to winter, where the cluster will likely perish. Bear fencing is another expense to an already unprofitable hobby and profession. Also, this protection is not completely effective. Unchecked, bear populations will continue to grow in numbers, creating significant financial burdens for beekeepers. Other nearby States have bear hunting seasons and bear are harvested in a humane manner. Opening a bear season is a positive move for increasing sportsman opportunities to pass on an outdoor American heritage and contribute to effective wildlife conservation.

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David L Lersch  
1 Konomoc drive  
Waterford, CT 06385  
(860)442-5936